

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 30 (2003)
Heft: 1

Inhaltsverzeichnis

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

Download PDF: 15.03.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

A decade lost or gained?

“The crisis in the watch industry was merely a taste of things to come: Swissair’s bankruptcy dealt Switzerland’s legendary invulnerability a death blow. The Swiss are seeking their place on the border of a Europe which is being built without them.” These were the opening words of a recent two-page background report on the “Swiss recession” published by the French newspaper “Le Monde”.

Did Switzerland make the right decision on 6 December 1992 (that “black Sunday”, as Jean-Pascal Delamuraz called it) when it rejected membership of the European Economic Area? The answer is not easy. After all, we only know one side of the coin – the reality which has followed the No vote. But the situation is far from rosy, and economic indicators are falling. Economic research centres have revised their forecasts downwards, and there is no recovery in sight until 2004.

In the ten years since Swiss voters rejected the idea of EEA membership, Switzerland has recorded the lowest growth of all OECD countries. It has neither boosted its economy nor created a viable domestic market because it has always been subject to the moodswings of the global economy.

Bad news is coming in from all quarters. For the first time the financial and banking sectors, including private banks, are also affected. Banking secrecy is threatened, and with it Switzerland’s status as a financial centre. Added to this, a rapid succession of scandals has shaken the confidence of Swiss citizens.

Unemployed numbers are set to rise to between 130,000 and 150,000 in Spring. Temporary lay-offs – an invention of the 1980s which allowed troubled companies to survive in difficult times – are now unheard of, for the simple reason that there is no end in sight for the crisis. So companies are responding by announcing redundancies – like the Swiss Post, another national icon.

Even the research sector is suffering setbacks. Pharma giant Novartis has transferred the lion’s share of its research activities to the USA. While parliament has approved a programme to provide universities with a financial shot in the arm, we barely had time to celebrate our most recent Nobel laureate before the famous scientist left to continue his research in the USA. The fact is that in the research field, as in other areas, Switzerland is becoming less attractive.

Naturally Switzerland’s international opportunities remain intact, provided the global economy recovers. This takes us back to the original issue: over the past ten years, Switzerland has been unable to provide proof that its isolationist decision was the right one. True, events have not proven it entirely wrong. Europe is struggling to turn its vision into reality. But Switzerland, which has never been as vulnerable as it is at present, has not succeeded in creating an “off-shore territory” of the type that certain interest groups were promoting in 1992 as a bulwark against “interventionism from Brussels”. Nor has it been able to justify its decision by creating a model which would have restored confidence among its citizens. As for its partners, they may slowly but surely be tiring of Switzerland’s complicated bilateral “special status”.

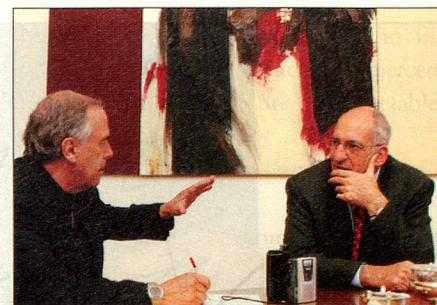
Euroseptics – those whose vision does not extend beyond the national horizon – now have the upper hand. In ten years the principle of pragmatism has become more attractive to critics of the European system. The result? The SVP is now one of the strongest political parties, and its opponents find it difficult to put their case. In theory the answer is simple: just define the interests and needs of Switzerland. In short, present a vision.

Isabelle Eichenberger

Translated from the German.



Isabelle Eichenberger



FOCUS

Ailing economy **4**

SESSION

Bitter farewell for Ruth Dreifuss **8**

POLITICS

The new Federal Councillor **9**

MEDIA

The shrinking media landscape **16**

MAILBAG

17

MOSAIC

18



Waiting for orders: While the employment rate in Switzerland is still high by international standards, there is little prospect of an economic upswing in the near future. Companies are keeping prices as low as possible, but order volumes are declining.

COVER: Patrick Lüthy

SWISS REVIEW

Swiss Review, the magazine for the Swiss Abroad, is in its 30th year of publication and is published in German, French, Italian, English and Spanish in more than 25 regional editions. It has a total circulation of over 360 000. Regional news appears four times a year.

Gabrielle Keller (gk), Editor-in-Chief; Rolf Ribi (RR); Isabelle Eichenberger (IE); Pablo Crivelli (PC); Gabriela Brodbeck (BDK), responsible for the Official News, Swiss Abroad Service EDA, CH-3003 Berne. Translation: Nicolette Chisholm.

Publisher, Editorial Office, Advertising: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16; New numbers: Tel. +41 31 356 61 10, Fax +41 31 356 61 01 Postal Account (Swiss National Giro): 30-6768-9.

Printed by: Buri Druck AG, CH-3084 Wabern.

Change of address: Please advise your local Embassy or Consulate – do not write to Berne. Single copy CHF 5.–

Internet: <http://www.revue.ch> E-mail: revue@aso.ch